



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

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Press Release

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On Memorial Day, Gov. Rick Perry Honors Veterans by Signing into Law a Bill That Creates an Entrepreneur Program

AUSTIN – This Memorial Day, Gov. Rick Perry signed into law Senate Bill 1476, which establishes the Veteran Entrepreneur Program at the Texas Veterans Commission.

"Every day, American service members sacrifice their lives for the freedoms we cherish, and it is appropriate that on this day of remembrance and thanks that we would strengthen our commitment to our Veterans and military families," Gov. Perry said. "Though no words or actions can heal the wounds of combat or return a lost loved one, Texas is honored to give back to Veterans and their families."

The program is based upon a highly successful pilot program, launched in April 2012, to foster and promote Veteran entrepreneurship and business ownership throughout the state. During the pilot program, over 1,000 Veterans received information on how to start or grow a business, and ten Veteran-owned businesses launched.

"Veteran entrepreneurs add value to their communities through economic development and create employment opportunities for other Veterans," said Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director of the Texas Veterans Commission. "We are proud of the work the 83rd Legislature did this session to ensure our Veterans are not forgotten in Texas, and we thank Gov. Perry, Sen. Royce West, and Rep. Ralph Sheffield for showing Texas Veterans that they can depend on their State to support and advocate for them."

The successful passage of Senate Bill 1476 was due in large part to the commitment of two senior legislators, Sen. West (D-Dallas) and Rep. Sheffield (R-Temple).

Based on the success of the pilot program and because of the overwhelming interest from Veterans in starting and expanding their own businesses, Sen. West filed SB 1476 to permanently establish the Veteran Entrepreneur Program at the Texas Veterans Commission. Sens. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) and Jose Rodríguez (D-El Paso) coauthored SB 1476.

Rep. Sheffield sponsored SB 1476 in the Texas House of Representatives with Rep. Rick Miller (R-Sugar Land) as a joint sponsor. Reps. José Menéndez (D-San Antonio), Nicole Collier (D-Fort Worth), Joe Farias (D-San Antonio), and Joe Moody (D-El Paso) co-sponsored SB 1476.

"The entrepreneurial spirit and business friendly environment that Texas prides itself on is evident in the passage of SB 1476," said Rep. Sheffield. "The bill will directly impact the nearly 1.7 million Veterans residing in Texas. I am proud to have carried this legislation, which will support and encourage our most honorable and distinguished residents of Texas who answered the call to serve."

Rep. Sheffield also played a critical role in securing the necessary funding for the Veterans Entrepreneurship Program by filing an amendment to the General Appropriations Act while it was being considered on the House floor. Speaker of the House Joe Straus, Rep. Jim Pitts, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Sylvester Turner, Vice Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, worked to ensure House support for funding the Veteran Entrepreneurship Program in the Conference Committee Report for Senate Bill 1.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. West, with the support of Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Sen. Tommy Williams, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, worked to ensure Senate support for funding the Veteran Entrepreneurship Program in the Conference Committee Report for Senate Bill 1.

The bill was signed in the House and the Senate on May 16 and sent to the Governor's office on the same day and will take effect immediately after signature.

Texas Veterans Commission

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to Veterans and their families in the areas of disability claims assistance, employment services, education benefits and grant funding. Over 200 skilled counselors in 75 cities provide one-on-one guidance to Veterans and their families to ensure they receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled.

For more information, go to www.tvc.texas.gov.

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